

Iowa Community Empowerment Newsletter

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Quality Counts

...at 2006 Early Care, Health & Education Day on the Hill!

On February 8, over 300 advocates came to the Capitol Rotunda to be seen and heard on behalf of our Youngest Iowans. This annual event sponsored by Iowa Community Empowerment, Iowa Child Care and Early Education Network, Early Childhood Iowa and Every Child Counts continues to see growth each year. The 2006 theme, "Quality Counts" was chosen because it resonates with everyone. From the Governor of our state, to policymakers, program providers, the families served, and communities, everyone is concerned about the quality of the services provided for children and families. Over 47 agencies and programs throughout the state of Iowa showcased the services they provide for families with children ages 0-5 years.

Several colleges across Iowa are now incorporating advocacy training into their early childhood curriculum, giving their students a background on how the process of government functions. This training culminates with their participation in the Day on the Hill activities. As part of this year's event, over 70 early childhood students and faculty began their experience with an advocacy refresher. They were honored with heartfelt words from First Lady Christie Vilsack as she validated their career choice. Representative Ro Foege shared with them what they might expect as they approached their legislators and Sheila Hansen and Kelly Soyer presented one more overview of Advocacy 101. After this pre-session event, the students enthusiastically converged on the Capitol.

While the Day on the Hill brings advocates together from across the state and provides a good time to network and get new ideas from each other, the most important part of the day is speaking with legislators and sharing with them about how the decisions they are faced with every day might affect children and families. Each year, the participants of the Day on the Hill are asked to give the event organizers an idea of which legislators they spoke with and the general tone of the meeting. They are also encouraged to make a note of any specific questions which were asked or if there is any follow-up needed. This year there were 222 "evaluations" returned and 99% of them indicated that their legislators were positive and supportive of early care, health and education issues.

The 2006 Day on the Hill will be remembered as a success; however, as all early childhood advocates know, speaking on behalf of children and families must take place more than just one day per year. For all you do *everyday* on behalf of our Youngest Iowans, a sincere thank you. And to assist you in your on-going efforts, the Early Childhood Iowa Public Engagement component group has developed several public awareness pieces around the central theme, "Quality Counts". The brochure can be viewed and downloaded at

http://www.state.ia.us/earlychildhood/eci/stakeholder/component_groups/public_eng_age.html. You can also learn more about the activities of this workgroup at the same link. If you would like to join their efforts, please contact one of the Public Engagement co-chairs, Sheila Hansen, shansen@cfpciowa.org or Kelly Schulte, kschulte@idph.state.ia.us for more information. For general assistance with advocacy, you can view the newly updated Advocacy Toolkit at http://www.empowerment.state.ia.us/tool_kit.asp.

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Disclaimer:

Many articles in this newsletter are submitted by various entities. The views and opinions contained within may or may not be those of Iowa Community Empowerment.

Update February 2006– March 2006

Links to Empowerment Web sites:

State: www.empowerment.state.ia.us

Benton County

www.bcempowerment.com

Black Hawk

www.cedarvalleyspromise.org

Buchanan Delaware Fayette

www.bdfempowerment.org

Cedar

www.empowercedarco.org

Cerro Gordo, Hancock, Worth

www.cghwempowerment.com

Dubuque

www.empowerdubuque.org

Floyd, Chickasaw, Mitchell

www.fmcempowerment.com

HAWC (Howard, Allamakee, Winneshiek, Clayton)

www.HAWC-Iowa.com

Hardin

<http://www.empowerhardin.com/>

Henry

www.healthyhenrycounty.org

Humboldt, Hamilton, Wright

www.buildingfamilies.net

Jasper

<http://www.jaspercountypowerment.org/>

Johnson

<http://www.jcempowerment.org>

Linn

www.linncountycommunityempowerment.org

Marshall

www.youthandviolence.org

Pocahontas, Calhoun and Webster

www.linking-families.com

Polk www.hspa.org

Scott:

www.scottcountypowerment.org

Story

<http://www.storycountyfamily.org>

Washington

www.empowerwashington.org

Woodbury www.siouxlandship.org

Early Care, Health and Education System Building Activities

- Education Appropriations Sub Committee presentation - Feb 1
- ECI Co-chairs Meeting - Feb 2
- ECI - Public Engagement group meeting - Feb 2
- ECHE Day on the Hill - Feb 8
- Administrative Rules Review Committee presentation - Feb 10
- 2006 Early Care, Health & Education Congress planning - Feb 10 & Mar 3
- ECI Stakeholders - Feb 14
- Empowerment Contacts/Coordinators Regional TA meeting - Feb 15
- ECI - Governance component workgroup - Feb 16 & Mar 16
- Public Comment for Empowerment Administrative Rules - Feb 23
- State Child Care Advisory Council steering committee - Feb 24
- ECI - Quality, Services & Programs workgroup meeting - Mar 1
- Early Childhood Summit - Iowa Business Council - Mar 1
- Iowa Pediatric Dental Association - ECI Strategic Plan - Mar 3
- 2007 ECHE Day on the Hill planning - Mar 3
- State Child Care Advisory Council - Mar 9
- ECI Resources & Funding - Mar 14
- QRS Oversight Committee - Mar 14
- ECI - Quality, Services & Programs Legislative Breakfast - Mar 16
- Iowa Empowerment Board - Mar 24

Site Visits/Technical Assistance Activities

- Clarke County IEB meeting planning - Feb 6
- Marion County Performance Measures training - Feb 20
- Wayne County - Feb 27
- Results Accountability Training - Carroll - Mar 2
- Decatur County - Mar 2
- Results Accountability Training - Cedar Rapids - Mar 10
- Board Development Training - Ft Dodge - Mar 10
- Audubon, Carroll, Guthrie, Greene - Mar 21
- Board Development Training - Des Moines - Mar 14
- Hardin County - March 21
- Boone County - Mar 23
- Washington County - Mar 30

Annual Report Reviews

- Muscatine - Feb 9
- Ida - Feb 10
- Mahaska/Wapello - Feb 23
- Woodbury - Mar 17
- Tama County - Mar 23
- HAWC - Mar 23

Other Events and Activities

Upcoming Events 2006 Calendar at a Glance

Iowa Empowerment Board

May 19, 2006
Clarke County
11:00 - 2:00

Empowerment Coordinators/Contacts Meetings

May 10, 2006
Heartland AEA, Johnston

Early Childhood Iowa Core Stakeholders

May 9, 2006

Early Care Health & Education Congress

November 14 & 15, 2006
Scheman Center, Ames

Protecting Children Is Everyone's Business

May 8-9, 2006
Sheraton, West Des Moines
www.regonline.com/pcaiaowa

Partnering with Parents

April 17-May 12, 2006
June – November, 2006
Full 11-module series
On-line
www.extension.iastate.edu/pwp

August 2-3, 2006

ISU Campus, Ames

www.extension.iastate.edu/pwp

Linkages/Outreach Activities

- Training planning - Maternal Depression Screening - Feb 1, Feb 20
- Covering Kids Now Taskforce - Feb
- HOPES update meeting - Feb 2
- DHS update meeting - Feb 2
- Head Start Family Support/Parent Education TA - Feb 3
- NGA Governor's Summit Conference Call - Feb 6
- WOI Radio Live Interview - Feb 9
- Early Childhood Outcomes meeting - Feb 15
- MCH Planning for State Priorities - Feb 16
- PCA Iowa and PCA VT (Caring for Kids training) planning - Feb 17, Mar 7
- Hawk-I board meeting - Feb 20
- RFA training for MCH agencies - Feb 21
- Iowa Community Action Agencies Legislative Forum - Feb 21
- Iowa Community Action Agencies Administrative Officers group - Feb 22
- Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development Steering Committee - Feb 22
- FaDSS Focus Groups - Mar 6 & 7
- Conference planning with PCA Iowa - Mar 7
- AMCHP Conference, Washington DC - Mar 5-8
- MCH Advisory Council - Mar 9
- State of Promise planning meeting - Mar 9
- Youth Development State Agency Workgroup - Mar 14
- Cover the Uninsured Week planning - March 14
- Early ACCESS - Mar 17
- Governor's AmeriCorp After-school Initiative - Mar 17
- FaDSS Coordinators Meeting - Mar 17
- IA Commission on Volunteer Services' Volunteer Day on the Hill - Mar 20
- AmeriCorp State of Promise - Mar 22
- Public Health Conference - Mar 28-29
- CCR&R Regional Directors CC Incentives Study meeting - Mar 29
- ICCEEN Board CC Incentives Study presentation - Mar 29
- AEA Statewide Governance Conference - Mar 30
- FaDSS Council - March 30
- AEA Statewide Governing Council Empowerment presentation - Mar 31
- Early Childhood regional forums - Mar 31

ECHE System Building Updates

The NEW Early Childhood Iowa Parent web site was launched on March 15th. Go to <http://www.parents.earlychildhoodiowa.org> to visit the web site. The site offers families information on parenting, health and safety, child development, child care, preschool, learning to read and write, healthy teeth, pregnancy, financial help, healthy eating and physical activity, community resources, including access to 211.

The site also offers a HELP ME NOW section that will provide emergency links for families that need immediate information and an evaluation component that will allow users to let us know how helpful the site has been.

Book marks advertising the web site are available through the Office of Empowerment.

As you surf the site, let us know what you think!

What's New?





www.empowerment.state.ua.us

Iowa Empowerment Board News March Meeting Update

If you've been following this bi-monthly column which summarizes the work of the Iowa Empowerment Board, you know how truly busy they have been, especially over the past year. This board has wrestled with tough issues and it is apparent that they want the children and families to come out on top. We would like to take this opportunity to express our deep gratitude to each one of the members of the Iowa Empowerment Board for their tireless commitment to our Youngest Iowans.

With the redesignation process complete for another year and the first funnel closed at the beginning of March, the Board got down to "business as usual" when they met on March 24th. Updates were provided as to the status of bills in this legislative session that affect children and families - and those that involve Empowerment specifically. The Board's by-laws, having been reviewed in January, were approved; and a presentation was made as to the status of the new web site geared toward parents that was legislated last year. For further information on the web site, see page 3 of this newsletter.

Iowa Empowerment Board members spent much of their time looking at the revision of the board's strategic plan. The process they are working through is very similar to the community plan process at the local level. At their last meeting they looked at the statewide data and during this meeting they followed up by identifying strengths and weaknesses drawn from the data. They then looked at setting priorities within the result areas. Rich discussion was shared and the board is looking forward to finalizing the plan at a future meeting.

The final item on the agenda was a presentation about Iowa's Promise and how this initiative is growing within our state. The next meeting of the board will be hosted by Family First, Clarke County Empowerment, on May 19, 2006 in Osceola, Iowa.

Meet New State Technical Assistance Team Member: **Beth Jones**



Beth Jones has been employed by the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) since March of 2001. Beth is the Project Coordinator for the Covering Kids and Families (CKF) program, a national health access initiative for low-income uninsured families. In addition to her work as the project coordinator for CKF and as member of the Empowerment technical assistance team, Beth is a child health consultant for local Maternal and Child Health agencies.

Beth graduated from the University of Iowa in 1999 and worked at River Hills School in Cedar Falls, Iowa before she started at IDPH. Beth and her husband Jared live in the Des Moines area with their 2 ½ year old daughter Ella and dog Sadie. Beth enjoys good music, good books, exercise, reading, travel and spending time with her family and friends. She has recently been learning all about wine by attending wine tastings and classes. In addition to her personal interests, Beth also spends her time outside of work as a Master of Public Administration student at Drake University.

Meet State Board Member: **Chris Carman**



Chris Carman has served on the Iowa Empowerment Board since 2004, and has been involved with the Linn County Community Empowerment Board since its inception in 1998. Chris believes that the Empowerment model holds tremendous promise for mobilizing local communities to meet the needs of young children. He feels fortunate to serve Empowerment at both the state and local level, and is pleased with Iowans' increased interest in early childhood development in recent years.

Chris's career in early childhood education began in Iowa City in 1973 with work in campus-based child care programs. He graduated from the University of Iowa in 1975 with a degree in Early Childhood/Elementary Education. During his studies, he was fortunate to have both Dr. Margaret Weiser and Dr. Carol Alexander Phillips as advisors. "Dr. Weiser and Dr. Phillips helped students see the great potential of the early childhood years. This perspective had a big impact on my career choices and my life", Chris says. After graduation, he taught kindergarten in Iowa and Colorado, and later directed non-profit early childhood programs in both of these states.

Most of Chris' work has focused on low-income children and families. He worked at the Hawkeye Area Community Action Program (HACAP) in Cedar Rapids for 15 years, including nearly a decade as Head Start Director. In the mid-1980's he served on Governor Branstad's Pre-Kindergarten/Kindergarten Taskforce. This group's recommendations provided the foundation for the Shared Visions preschool program that started in 1988. During the 1990's, Chris began to have involvement with a number of national organizations. He served on the National Head Start Bureau's "Panel of Experts" and on the advisory committee for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's "Free To Grow" initiative. Along with others in Linn County, Chris was active in starting the "Partnership For Safe Families" funded by the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation to increase community involvement in child protection. Chris was appointed to the "Iowa Learns Council" by Governor Vilsack in 2003, and currently serves as a member of the Children's Defense Fund's Child Care Advocacy Fellowship. Chris and his wife, Tara Youells, have been married for 31 years and live in Cedar Rapids. They have two adult children who live in Wisconsin and Tennessee.

Nominations Sought For Iowa Empowerment Board

The Iowa Empowerment Board consists of thirteen citizen members, five state agency directors and six members of the general assembly. The state Empowerment Board currently is seeking candidates for citizen members. Citizen members are appointed by Governor Thomas Vilsack and confirmed by the Iowa Senate. Interested candidates must complete a gubernatorial appointment resume in addition to seeking a letter of recommendation from their local empowerment board. The gubernatorial appointment resume can be found at <http://www.iowai.net/iowa/governor/boards/>. Citizen member selections are reflective of the state's congressional districts to ensure representation from across the state. An equally important criterion is that appointments reflect the ethnic, cultural, social, and economic diversity of our state. We encourage candidates from diverse populations to apply.

You can also find the job responsibilities of an Iowa Empowerment Board member on our web site at the following link, http://www.empowerment.state.ia.us/Common/pdf/ieb_responsibilities.pdf

Please contact the Office of Empowerment if you need more information.

Tool Available to Assist Local Empowerment Boards with Citizen Representation

Tool EE: *Who Qualifies as a Citizen Representative on a Local Community Empowerment Board?* (along with Tool GG: *Statutory Responsibilities of a Community Empowerment Board*) are valuable in assisting local boards with their membership. These tools can be found on the Iowa Empowerment web site at www.empowerment.state.ia.us and click on Empowerment Tools.

Tool EE:

Legislative Language	Iowa Code, Chapter 28, requires that fifty-one percent of the members of a community empowerment board must be citizen representatives or elected officials. The Code also requires that the chairperson of the community empowerment board is either a citizen representative or an elected official. These requirements are to ensure that community empowerment boards are citizen-led boards and that the general interest of children and families is primary in all decision making.
Definitions	An elected official is defined as, “a member of a board or governing body elected through the means of a public election.” Iowa Administrative Code, 349, Chapter One, defines a citizen representative as, “a resident of the empowerment area, who is not an elected official, or a required representative for education, health and human services, or a paid staff member of an agency whose services fall under the plan or purview of the community empowerment board. A citizen representative may also represent faith, consumer, or business.”
First Step	From the Administrative Code we can determine that the first step in determining if your citizen representative board members meet this definition is to determine if they reside within the geographic boundaries of your empowerment area.
Second Step	The second step is to ensure that the citizen representative is not also serving as a required representative for education, health or human services.
Final Step	The final step is to determine if they are a paid staff member of an organization or an independent consultant that is receiving funding directly from the local empowerment board. An example of direct funding would be the board member’s employing organization has a contract with the local empowerment board. This board member can not be counted as a citizen representative. This is true even if their employment in the organization is not directly impacted by the funding the organization receives from the community empowerment board.
Consumer Representative	The consumer representative who may also count as a citizen representative is defined in Administrative Rules as, “an individual or a family member who is or has been receiving services or who is impacted by the community plan.” The consumer representative therefore may receive funding directly or indirectly from the community empowerment board.
Other Important Considerations	<p>Does this mean that members that don’t reside in the empowerment area or that receive funding from the empowerment board can’t be board members? No – it just means that they can not be counted as citizen representatives and they also can not serve as chairpersons.</p> <p>Additional human service, health, education members (beyond the required three) and service providers that reside in the empowerment area and do not receive funding may count toward the 51% citizen membership. There are several key points that board members and the board as a whole should keep in mind. Additional human service, health, education representatives and service providers that are being counted as citizen representatives do <u>not</u> represent their disciplines or organizations but rather as citizen representatives they are to represent the population at large.</p> <p>The board will want to be conscientious if they have too many board members representing an organization or a certain field that their board may be out of balance. The board must also hold each citizen representative member accountable to assure the general interest of children and families is primary. A community board may have stricter membership restrictions in their by-laws and still be in compliance with the Code.</p> <p>Service providers serving on the board should not abuse their position on the board to sway the board to vote for funding for their organization. Please refer to the conflict of interest Tool V for more information. A board that has multiple service providers, health, human service and education members may be perceived by the community at large to have inherent conflicts of interest. Diverse board members will assist the board in being more inclusive in thinking and decision making.</p>
Technical Assistance	Contact: Shanell Wagler, Facilitator Office of Empowerment, Iowa Department of Management 515-281-4321 Shanell.Wagler@iowa.gov

Strengthening Our Communities: Spring Training Opportunities



Prevent Child Abuse Iowa

In March, the Iowa Community Empowerment State Technical Assistance Team partnered with Prevent Child Abuse Iowa and Community Partnerships for Protecting Children to host trainings for their statewide networks. The trainings covered two main topics: board development and results accountability.

Presentations included information designed specifically for each network's audience along with general information that addressed their shared interests. Participants included board members and service providers from across the state, making for rich discussions and diverse learning opportunities. Attendees helped shape the sessions through their strong participation and thoughtful comments, which the presenters greatly appreciated.

What some of the participants had to say about the day:

- "This exceeded my expectations!"
- "I found the training to be very informational. I do not work in this field, so I am not aware of a lot of the procedures, etc., but it was applicable to so many situations. And, the presenters were WONDERFUL - both very knowledgeable of the information. It was never boring. ...Although the Campus Care Advisory Committee that I am chair of is not a decision-making body, we'll be able to use the information in our quest to help guide the decision-makers."
- "The training was very good. It gave us some tools that we will be using this year for proposal evaluation regarding funding decisions. It was very worthwhile."

Thanks to everyone for making these training opportunities a success!

Iowa State University Extension to Families

www.extension.iastate.edu/families/

Community Conversations: Quality Child Care *Findings from 12 Community Deliberative Forums*

As part of the *Child Care Lasts a Lifetime* campaign, in the fall of 2005, over 300 Iowans in 12 community forums deliberated the public issue of improving the quality of child care. Three policy approaches for helping communities enhance the quality of child care were discussed: increasing government regulation; enhancing parent education; and facilitating parental care. Forums were held in Council Bluffs, Des Moines, Davenport, Dubuque, Algona, Tipton, Decorah, Burlington, Eldora, Keokuk, Ottumwa and Keosauqua.

About one third of the forum participants who responded to the post evaluation questionnaire reported they were thinking differently about the quality child care issue after participating in the community conversation, and 60% indicated they discussed aspects of the issue that they had not discussed before. Certainly just having the conversation was of benefit to individuals.

Research about forums indicates that individuals, while they may not change their minds, do feel they better understand the complexity of the issue and are open to listening to others' perspectives. Participants' comments reflect this. In order for change however, individuals need to act!

To learn more about the forums and recommended follow up action steps, you can view the 3-page report, "Supporting Quality Child Care: What Should We Do?" at https://www.extension.iastate.edu/childcare/quality/conversation/short_report.pdf.



Every Child Counts

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For a list of your federal and state legislators, visit:

<http://www4.legis.state.ia.us/find-leg/>

To find out about individual state legislators, you can go to:

<http://www.legis.state.ia.us/asp/Legislators/LegislatorInfo.aspx>

Key Facts on Preschool in America

Quality Preschool Helps Children Get Ready for School.

Children who attend quality preschool are more likely to enter kindergarten with greater reading and mathematics ability, superior thinking and attention skills, and fewer behavioral problems than those who do not.

Quality Preschool Helps Children Throughout Life.

Children who have attended quality preschool are more likely to graduate from high school, attend college, and earn more as adults than those who do not.

Quality Matters in Preschool.

The quality of preschool education is key to preparing children for success in school and life. Yet many preschool programs in the United States are poor to mediocre.

Too Many Children Are Left Behind.

Millions of children, particularly poor and minority children, cannot attend preschool either because none is available in their community or their parents cannot afford it. Head Start, the highly successful federal preschool program, serves only 60 percent of eligible children. A Carnegie Corporation report on child development expressed concern for these children, finding that "the years of promise represent lost opportunity at a crucially formative stage of their development."

Quality Preschool Saves Money.

For every \$1 invested in quality preschool programs, society receives \$4 to \$7 in long term savings, as a result of higher rates of high school graduation, decreased need for remedial and special education, lower rates of juvenile delinquency and greater individual earning power.

Quality Preschool is a Great Investment.

The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis found that early childhood investments make more sense than spending on venture capital funds, subsidizing new industries, building new stadiums or providing tax incentives for business.

The Public Supports Quality Preschool for All Children.

Parents aren't alone. Polls consistently show overwhelming public support for investment in quality preschool. A 2001 national poll conducted for the National Institute for Early Education Research found that nearly 90 percent of voters supported the view that states should provide funding for preschool programs so that all parents could afford to enroll their children in high-quality programs.

Key Leaders Support Quality Preschool.

Business, educational and law enforcement leaders support quality preschool for all our children. Eighty-five percent of police chief polled said that providing quality educational child care programs for preschool-age children will help children succeed in school and significantly reduce crime. The chief executive officers representing close to 150 leading U.S. corporations have declared that 'far too many children enter school ill-prepared' and that the federal government must 'make early childhood education a national priority.'

Our Nation Makes a Minimal Investment in Preschool.

Even though most brain development takes place in the years before age five, the majority of public spending on children occurs after age five. Further, while we increasingly participate in a global economy, our preschool investments and policies rank poorly compared to other industrialized countries. European countries, for example, ensure that nearly all three- to five year olds have access to early education.

From: Parent's Action for Children

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® IOWA Scholarship Program

Iowa Child Care & Early Education Network

Submitted by Barb Merrill,
Apprenticeship/TEACH Program
Coordinator



Entering spring semester 2006, we are thrilled to report an increase in the number of funding partners and scholarship recipients participating in the T.E.A.C.H. program! Funding for T.E.A.C.H. comes in part from the Iowa Department of Human Services through federal funding from the Child Care Development Block Grant, from United Way of Central Iowa Women’s Leadership Connection, from the Boone, Dallas, FMC, HAWC, Linn, Marion, Polk, Scott, and Story Community Empowerment areas, and from the child care programs who co-sponsor a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship recipient. If you are interested in more information on how you can support providers from your area, contact Barb Merrill at (515) 883-1206, or bmerrill@iowachildnetwork.org.

New participation from child care providers and teachers comes thanks to those of you who encourage others to consider attending college with support from T.E.A.C.H. With the implementation of Iowa’s Quality Rating System and a new focus on the importance of education and degrees, we anticipate participation will increase in the year ahead. Our primary task for spring is recruitment and expansion of our program. If you have an upcoming training conference, a provider recognition event, an association meeting, a local Empowerment meeting, or similar event – please invite one of our staff to come and share our successes in hopes of encouraging others to participate. We’d be glad to present or exhibit at your event, or join a community planning meeting.

T.E.A.C.H. associate degree recipients complete 9-15 college credits annually, while continuing to provide early care and education full-time. They have made a commitment to remain in their early childhood program for a year following the scholarship contract’s completion.

Compensations increases are provided every twelve months.

What is a Self-Study?

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® is licensed in 23 states through Child Care Services Association in North Carolina, where it was created and founded over fifteen years ago. As a high profile program, integrity is key, as well as ensuring continuous program improvement. The T.E.A.C.H. self-study is required as a tool to be completed after the first three years’ of a state’s license, in order to renew and continue the project. The self-study is completed by the state and is a mechanism to self-assess and report on program successes and needs. Our Iowa license is due for renewal with Child Care Services Association on May 1, 2006, so our self-study process was completed by March 1. The self-study includes fifteen competencies to report on and document, addressing areas of program administration, advocacy, and awareness. The evaluators will include one T.E.A.C.H. technical assistance specialist and two project managers from other states, who will determine our score on each of the fifteen competencies to earn license renewal for another two years. We documented diverse and increasing participation in the project, complete and timely reports being submitted, well-trained and qualified staff, an active advisory team, recruitment efforts, involvement in public policy efforts around issues of

education, compensation, and retention in the field, partnerships with community colleges, and much more.

Scholarship applications are available on our website:
<http://www.iowachildnetwork.org>.

T.E.A.C.H. Associate Degree Scholarship Current Participants by College				
COMMUNITY COLLEGE SPRING SEMESTER 2006 REGISTRATIONS	DIRECTORS OF CENTERS	FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDERS	TEACHERS IN CENTERS AND PRESCHOOLS	TOTAL
Des Moines Area	3	36	61	100
Hawkeye		1		1
Indian Hills		4	2	6
Iowa Lakes			4	4
Iowa Western		1	2	3
Kirkwood		7	5	12
Marshalltown		6	3	9
North Iowa Area	1	4	1	6
Northeast Iowa		4	1	5
Scott	2	5	8	15
Southeastern		1		1
Southwestern		2	1	3
Western Iowa Tech		3	1	4
Total	5	74	89	169

Iowa Program for Infant & Toddler Caregivers (IA PITC)

Taking steps toward...



...raising the quality of care for Iowa's infants and toddlers."

Making a Difference: IA PITC

In its fifth year now, we are seeing many ways that the PITC training in Iowa is making a difference to child care providers and how they care for babies and toddlers.

Enthusiastically received by hundreds of providers, foster and adoptive parents, as well as college students around the state there has been a steady increase in the number of professionals who take the entire series. And this year a new component (training on the environmental rating scales) has been added. In addition, providers may request more in-depth technical assistance to help them implement the concepts.

The following are the types of comments we see in the participant follow-up plans:

"I used to -

- Think that babies didn't know how to communicate with you; **now** I think about the different temperaments... have more patience and let the child lead the way
- Think it was almost impossible to "read" the children; now I think that it is easy with the right knowledge... **now** I better understand what the children like.
- Think most children are alike; **now** I think that each child is unique.
- Blend the children putting them in the same category treating them as one and not (as) individuals; **now** I treat them as individuals.
- Think children were more moldable; **now** I believe that they are born with certain traits and levels of traits—I will adjust for differences.
- Get upset when some children just wouldn't settle into routines quickly; **now** I recognize the signs and give them their time needed.
- Think discipline was all the same, and pushed them to do what I wanted; **now** I think there is a big difference...I will watch, ask, and adapt.
- Think all (babies) could do the same thing at one time; **now** I think that children move at their own pace...I have different activities for all kinds of temperaments.
- Think that all infants went with the flow of learning; **now** I follow their interests, adjust with them, and observe.

The PITC asks early childhood professionals to change the way that they think about babies' and toddlers' needs and how to best support their development and learning. For more information on the training series or college level coursework please contact the regional PITC Specialist through your local Child Care Resource and Referral office. To find the specialist in your area, visit <http://www.iowachildnetwork.org/ccr&r.htm>.

Check it Out!



- *The Advocacy Tool kit has been updated is now available on-line at http://www.empowerment.state.ia.us/tool_kit.asp.*
- *A special thank you to Every Child Counts for their assistance with the revisions!*

Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral



Submitted by Cathy Wheatcraft & Emily Moriarity, CCR&R of Central Iowa

CCR&R and Polk County Empowerment Quality Improvement Collaborations

Child Care Resource & Referral of Central Iowa and Polk County Empowerment are partners in several collaborations with the intent of improving the quality of early care and education in Polk County.

The **Polk County Provider Recognition Project** is designed to recognize providers for achieving professional development and national accreditation. Providers receive technical assistance and consultation from a Professional Development Consultant and are recognized for their professional achievements through a cash bonus for completing all 10 modules of ChildNet, ChildNet Certification, and ChildNet Recertification.

The Professional Recognition Project has a specific focus on achieving national accreditation through the National Association of Family Child Care through financial assistance with the accreditation fees, support for equipment and training, technical assistance and onsite consultation. There are currently 27 providers in Polk County enrolled in the Provider Recognition Project. Five providers have applied and are in the self-study phase of the accreditation process. Two providers have completed their national observation and one recently received national accreditation! Another provider who has been accredited in Polk County for six years recently joined the project and will be starting her re-accreditation process for the second time. It is exciting to see providers work toward national recognition for the quality of child care they provide.

A **Child Care Consultant** offers training, technical assistance and on-site consultation to participating child care centers in Polk County. Five centers in Des Moines where 50-90% of the children enrolled receive child care assistance have been identified and are working with the Child Care Consultant to improve the quality of their programs. Working with the center directors to identify their staffs' training needs, customized training has been offered to these centers in combination with onsite consultation. In between training sessions the Child Care Consultant visits the staff in each participating classroom to assist staff in implementing the best practices covered in the training. Additionally, as a result of the training and consultation, five center staff have committed to the TEACH program and plan to attend DMACC, taking Child Development courses.

CCR&R provider and parent services are now available for Spanish speaking providers and families through an **Hispanic Outreach** project which also includes Hispanic Educational Resources (HER) as a partner. An Hispanic Outreach Coordinator maintains weekly office hours at HER to provide families with referrals to child care and education programs, help providers access training and technical assistance through CCR&R and recruit new providers.

CCR&R of Central Iowa and Polk County Community Empowerment held two **Iowa Quality Rating System Kick-Off** events on March 2 and 4. Information about the QRS and how to apply was presented as well as research based information on why quality in child care and education settings improves outcomes for children. The participating providers also learned about the Making A Difference supports and resources available to providers participating in the QRS. 138 Polk County providers attended the kick off events, including 63 home providers and 75 center directors and staff. Of the 84 evaluations returned

- 68 programs indicated they plan to apply for a QRS level during the next year
- 76 said that the QRS will help them improve the quality of their programs
- 65 said the QRS will help them advance professionally

For more information, contact CCR&R of Central Iowa at 515-246-3566.

Iowa's Quality Rating System (QRS)



As you are all aware, Iowa is currently implementing a Quality Rating System (QRS) for child care providers. The current QRS is the product of three years of hard work by two work groups. These groups worked diligently to identify measurable indicators of child care quality, while keeping in mind the unique characteristics of Iowa and Iowa's current child care landscape.

A few important items to remember about QRS:

- The system is *voluntary* – providers will not be required to participate.
- QRS is a five level system. Levels 1 and 2 have set requirements that must be met fully in order to be rated Level 1 or 2. Levels 3-5 consist of specific categories of criteria, with each item receiving a set number of points. Levels 3-5 are determined by the total number of points the program earns. At least one point must be earned in each category.
- Ratings are in effect for 24 months. Providers may request a new rating every 12 months.
- Providers will receive achievement bonuses for participation in the QRS. The following tables outline the achievement bonus structure. Bonuses are received at the time of the initial rating, when the rating is renewed, and if an increase in the rating occurs during the 24-month period.

QRS Achievement Bonus Schedule For Licensed Child Care Centers				
QRS Level	Center licensed to care for up to 25 children	Center licensed to care for 26-50 children	Center licensed to care for 51-100 children	Center licensed to care for >100 children
2	\$400	\$800	\$1200	\$1600
3	\$600	\$1200	\$1800	\$2400
4	\$800	\$1600	\$2400	\$3200
5	\$1000	\$2000	\$3000	\$4000

QRS Achievement Bonus Schedule For Child Development Homes	
QRS level	
2	\$400
3	\$600
4	\$800
5	\$1000

How do providers apply for QRS?

- Applications are available at each of the regional Child Care Resource and Referral agencies. In addition, a QRS specialist will be located in each of these agencies to assist programs in participation, provide resource coordination for QRS providers, and work with community groups to help them understand how they can best support the QRS in their region.
- Completed applications are submitted to DHS Central Office. Once the appropriate level is determined, the certificate and achievement bonus will be issued.

How can a Community Empowerment Area assist providers in QRS participation?

- Provide TEACH scholarships to child care providers.
- Assist with funding of additional series of ChildNet training through your local Child Care Resource and Referral agency.
- Provide health and safety items
- Provide training opportunities.
- Financial support for memberships in NAEYC, NAFCC, NAA
- Financial support and/or technical assistance support in reaching accreditation

Additional information regarding the QRS and Empowerment supports will be provided at the May Empowerment Coordinators meeting.

Even Start Program Faces Cuts



For more information about Even Start in Iowa, visit

www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/is/ecn/evenstart.html

or call/email Tom Rendon at 515-242-6024

tom.rendon@iowa.gov.

The purpose of Even Start is to break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy by improving the educational opportunities of low-literacy and low-income families.

Even Start is based on a research-based model that integrates three crucial components into a single unified family literacy program to support families:

- *early childhood education for children*
- *adult literacy or adult basic education for parents*
- *parenting education*

Even Start, a family literacy program funded through the U.S. Department of Education, is facing a cut of more than 50 percent in the coming 2006-07 program year. In Iowa, where 8 projects across the state are funded, these cuts will mean all programs will be severely reduced and some may not be funded at all. Some of the Iowa programs have been in existence for fifteen years, and match their federal funding by as much as 70 percent with local and state dollars.

In Iowa, the program is administered through the Iowa Department of Education.

The program has “Indicators of Quality” that demonstrate Even Start is running high quality programs and has achieved strong results for children and families. Results for Iowa in 2004 are:

- Percentage of programs with NAEYC accreditation or that score 5 or higher on the ECERS-R: 100
- Served 258 adults and 318 children from 237 families, nearly half of which are English Language Learners.
- Number of hours per month, on average, parents participated in parenting education classes: 14.5.
- Number of hours per month, on average, parents participated in adult education classes: 42.5.
- Among English speakers, 35 percent enrolled or advanced in GED study, almost 20 percent graduated from high school or received a GED certificate and 16 percent enrolled in community college or 4-year institutions.
- Percentage of Even Start families with library cards: 100
- Percentage of participating children received hearing, vision and/or developmental screening: 92
- Average number of monthly visits per family: 2.5
- Percentage of Even Start children ages 3-5 advanced one level in each of the following domains: language/literacy, social/emotional, mathematical, physical health/growth and development, the creative arts: 80
- Percentage of staff with 4-year degrees: 68

These numbers are testimony to the effectiveness of the Even Start family literacy model. Parents and children learning together create a powerful synergy where success builds on success.

Programs worry, however, that cuts will have a dramatic impact on their abilities to produce results like these. In Estherville, the Even Start preschool serving mainly English Language Learners, which was recently accredited through NAEYC, would have to cut an afternoon session reducing children served and letting a valuable community resource be dormant. This despite seeing a dramatic decrease in retained kindergartners over the past few years because of their early exposure to English language instruction through Even Start. In Leon, where the center was also just accredited through NAEYC, the Even Start preschool services would be eliminated. In Sioux City, the district would do away with the toddler teacher position and thereby lose half the children they currently serve. In Storm Lake, two half-day sessions would be reduced to just one half-day session. In some areas, such as Fort Dodge, Storm Lake and Decatur County (where adult illiteracy levels are among the highest in the state), reduced grants would mean eliminating transportation services that effectively bar families from participation.

Programs are seeking additional sources of community support to make sure these unfortunate consequences don’t materialize. Literacy can be a common rallying point to address family development needs, and provide children with the start they need for future academic success. Building on the success of this initiative should be the priority of all communities working to ensure that every children beginning at birth is healthy and successful.

Upcoming Opportunities



PROTECTING CHILDREN IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION CONFERENCE

HOSTED BY PREVENT CHILD ABUSE IOWA FOR 25 YEARS

MAY 8-9, 2006

Sheraton West Des Moines
1800 50th Street • West Des Moines, Iowa

This annual conference is designed to give conference participants practical information, expertise, and training on dealing with child abuse, and sexual abuse in particular and is appropriate for anyone who wishes to end child abuse in Iowa.

To register on-line, visit www.regonline.com/pcaiowa. It is quick, easy and convenient!

Save the Date!

September 27, 2006
Carroll, Iowa



Drug Affected Children: How do we care for them?

Drug exposure frequently impacts the medical outcomes of a child by causing such conditions as feeding problems, developmental delays, learning disabilities, and behavioral problems. Many drug-exposed infants and children go unrecognized because they often do not exhibit any obvious signs or symptoms of exposure.

This all-day workshop will address the medical complications of maternal drug use and infant exposure. It will present treatment options as well as other interventions useful in managing these medical conditions. Screening methods to improve identification of drug-exposed/drug-endangered children early in life will also be discussed.

Finally, information will be shared on how a DEC program can help communities assure the safety and health of drug affected children. The target audience includes medical professionals, nurses, social workers, substance abuse counselors, school personnel, Early Access workers, childcare providers, foster parents, mental health providers, DHS employees, county attorneys, law enforcement, and any other interested persons. CEU's are being planned.

For more information, contact Sue Gehling from the Carroll office of Child Health Specialty Clinics at 712-792-5530, or email her at sue-gehling@iowa.edu.



Healthy Smiles Project Results Have People Smiling

The Iowa Head Start Association’s Healthy Smiles program finished its pilot year last December, but the results from its data collection are just now available. This innovative program used parent education to keep young children cavity-free. The results have put a smile on the face of its planners and funders.

“We are so pleased with our results,” says Marcia Manter, the project coordinator from Flint Associates in Kansas. “The funders were also thrilled with what we were able to achieve.” Early childhood oral disease is the most common infectious disease affecting young children. Parents are the first and most obvious line of defense against this malady.

The project, funded by grants from Delta Dental of Iowa and the Mid-Iowa Health Foundation, created a set of 17 mini-modules on proactive oral health practices for young children and delivered those lessons to families through a coalition of Iowa home visiting programs, including Head Start, Early Head Start and some Empowerment programs. HAWC Empowerment Area took advantage of the training and reached 66 families. Thirteen co-trainers conducted 8 orientation sessions and 18 skill-building sessions. A total of 610 family workers were trained. These workers reached (at a minimum) 1,373 families, engaging 1,190 parents in their children’s oral health care. Across the state, family workers were able to increase the number of parents performing monthly lift-the-lip inspections by 393, a 32.5 percent increase. Lift the lip is a simple procedure that helps identify white spot lesions. These spots will grow into early childhood caries or severe dental decay cavities unless addressed.

A survey conducted at the conclusion of the grant revealed that a strong majority of trained home visitors believe that Healthy Smiles strategies improved their overall abilities to educate parents, not only about oral health but other aspects of child development. Healthy Smiles was also able to respond to programs requesting materials in Spanish, including translating the Healthy Smiles flipchart into Spanish.

Through the use of mini-modules, home visitors discussed a wide variety of lessons and practices; but did the training make any difference? An innovative data collection system helped workers track changes in parent behavior between visits, in some cases as short as six weeks, in others as long as nine months. The table below summarizes the changes:

	At Beginning (percentage saying “yes.”)	At End (percentage saying “yes.”)	Change
Can parents identify three causes of cavities?	80.2%	91.4%	11.3%
Do parents conduct “Lift the Lip” screening monthly?	36.3%	68.8%	32.5%
Does the child receive fluoride varnish treatments?	46.3%	54.4%	8.1%
Do parents clean/brush child’s teeth morning and night?	73.2%	83.3%	10.1%
Does family avoid grazing, for example on chips and cookies?	66.2%	75.0%	8.8%
Does family provide child only 8 oz of juice per day?	65.2%	74.8%	9.6%
Does the family have a community dentist who sees children?	81.6%	87.8%	6.1%

For more information about Healthy Smiles or to purchase a copy of the flip charts, call/email Tom Rendon at 515-242-6024 or tom.rendon@iowa.gov.

National Public Health Week April 3-9, 2006



National Public Health Week (NPHW) is scheduled for April 3-9, 2006. This year's theme is *Designing Healthy Communities: Raising Healthy Kids*. During NPHW, the American Public Health Association (APHA) will aim to improve the understanding of the relationship between built environments- homes, schools, parks and community design- and the health and safety of children by promoting solutions that families, communities and policy-makers can use to improve children's health in their communities. Each day, having a different theme, will focus on the relationship between the built environment and a core children's health issue, with additional focus on effective solutions based on case studies from model communities.

To help promote NPHW, Iowa has formed a workgroup that includes 31 leaders representing health care providers, Iowa's public health association, education, programs for children and families, and local and state public health agencies.

The workgroup will capitalize on this opportunity to increase the public's awareness and appreciation of public health in Iowa. Each day of the week has a specific focus, which includes:

Monday: Designing Healthy Communities: Raising Healthy Kids
Tuesday: Surrounding Our Kids with Equal Opportunities
Wednesday: Surrounding Our Kids with Physical Activity
Thursday: Surrounding Our Kids with Safety
Friday: Surrounding Our Kids with Clean Air

For more information, contact Joyce Allard at jallard@idph.state.ia.us or visit the American Public Health Association Web site at www.apha.org/nphw.

Local On-line Resources

- Iowa Department of Public Health www.idph.state.ia.us/do/nphw_2006.asp. tools and resources, a proclamation from Governor Vilsack, a calendar of events in Iowa, a news release template, Internet resources and more. Check the site frequently as new things will be added often.
- Iowa Public Health Association www.iowapha.org.



Healthy Child Care Iowa (HCCI)

Sally Clausen, ARNP, BSN
 Healthy Child Care Iowa
 Iowa Department of Public Health
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HCCI Update

There are new items on the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) list of hazardous products. You may view a list of products that relate to child care and early education: <http://www.idph.state.ia.us/hcci/recalls.asp>. Beginning in April, Healthy Child Care Iowa will add to the recall/hazard warning webpage announcements from the federal Food and Drug Administration. We have included in this message the direct website for the FDA.

To view recalled product information, first select a product category from the following list.

- [Beds, Cribs, and Bedding](#) no new recalls
- [Child Clothing, Shoes, and Accessories](#) 2 new recalls
- [Equipment \(including infant supplies/equipment\)](#) 5 new recalls
- [Furniture Related to Child Care and Early Education](#) no new recalls
- [Toys and Play Related Items](#) 5 new recalls

You can find information on over 4,000 product recalls using the various searches on the CPSC web site: <http://www.cpsc.gov>.

To view food and drug related items that have been recalled or carry a warning hazard visit: <http://www.fda.gov/opacom/7alerts.html>

[FDA Informs Public of Nationwide Infant Formula Recall](#) (February 22, 2006)

[FDA Warns Consumers to Stop Using Recalled Liquid-Filled Children's Teething Rings Manufactured by RC2 Brands \(The First Years\)](#) (February 9, 2006)

[The First Years® Announces Voluntary Recall of Liquid-Filled Teethers](#) (January 27, 2006)

[State Health Department Issues Warning on Juice Harvest Assorted Juices](#) (January 20, 2006)

[Roche Diagnostics Issues a Worldwide Voluntary Recall of Some of its ACCU-CHEK® Aviva Meters](#) (January 16, 2006)

Submitted by Jenny Untiedt
 IDPH
 Covering Kids & Families

Covering Kids and Families Now Task Force Releases New Materials

The Covering Kids & Families *Now* Task Force has released three new educational materials. These include Issue Brief # 9 Shortfalls in Federal Funding and Its Impact on hawk-i., Issue Brief # 10 Coordination of the Free/Reduced Lunch Program and hawk-i and Medicaid and the 2006 Winter Report: How Iowa Insures Its Children. The issue briefs and the winter report are designed to inform policy makers about important issues relating to Iowa's Medicaid and hawk-i programs in an effort to encourage well-informed policies for those programs.

Issue Brief # 9 discusses the funding structure of State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) at the national level. Many states, including Iowa, are projected to have funding shortfalls for their SCHIP programs in 2006 and 2007. Unless federal policy makers make decisions that will change this situation, state policy makers may be faced with difficult decisions on maintaining health care coverage for Iowa's children.

Issue Brief # 10 discusses coordination of the free/reduced lunch program and *hawk-i* and Medicaid as a mechanism for outreach. This issue brief looks at using alternative methods of reaching eligible children such as getting direct referrals from the free and reduced lunch program to state-sponsored health insurance programs.

The *2006 Winter Report* outlines how Iowa insures its children and spotlights accomplishments and highlights from Covering Kids & Families (CKF). The project is in its seventh and final year of funding provided by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, so the report provides an overview on the importance of sustainability for CKF efforts.

The issue briefs and winter report are available on the CKF website at: <http://www.idph.state.ia.us/coveringkids/taskforce.asp>.

Looking for Data You Can Use Locally?



Prevent Child Abuse Iowa

http://www.pcaiowa.org/child_abuse_data.html

The Child Abuse data page has several different sets of tables analyzing these figures for 2005 and preceding years:

- Overall child abuse numbers and rates of abuse
- The number and types of abuse found by DHS by year and averaged over five years
- Rankings among the counties in abuse rates
- Drug-related child abuse
- The age of child victims

Iowa Barriers to Prenatal Care

<http://www.idph.state.ia.us/resources.asp> - Select the Iowa Barriers to Prenatal Care - State Data or County Data.

This site provides brief, accurate information about women delivering babies in Iowa hospitals. Specifically, the project seeks to learn if women had problems getting prenatal or delivery care during their pregnancy. Other information is included which may be pertinent to health planners or those concerned with the systematic development of health care services. It is also extremely valuable for those working on collaborative community plans.

Iowa's Early Childhood Vision: Every child, beginning at birth, will be healthy and successful.